

# Tips for Clean-up after Flooding

**Source: Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel – Posted: June 9, 2008**

- Use caution when entering a building. Make sure power is off and the structure is sound. Do not use appliances that have been wet. Have gas appliances inspected and cleaned after flooding.
- Protect yourself. Wear an organic vapor respirator, available from building supply stores, along with rubber gloves, eye protection and protective clothing. Ventilate affected areas.
- Know what items to throw away. Porous items that are wet shouldn't be restored. Drywall, carpet and pad, mattresses, pillows, box springs and particle board should be discarded if wet.
- Wet clothing may be salvageable. Machine washing, including at least a 10-minute soak in detergent and hot water, should remove most contamination and stains.
- Open pockets of saturation by removing base molding and portions of damaged walls and wet insulation. Locate the water line and measure 15 to 20 inches above it. Everything below that should be removed.
- Flooring should be removed to expose pockets of saturation underneath by cleaning, sanitizing and drying.
- Clean aggressively. Wall cavities and exposed durable materials (studs and joists) should be cleaned by pressure washing with detergent solutions. After thorough cleaning, apply a disinfectant liberally.
- Prevent mold growth.
- Dry out before you rebuild. To prevent dry rot and ongoing structural damage, don't reconstruct or cover wood materials until its moisture content falls below 16%. It may be best to hire a water restoration professional to confirm proper drying.

## **Tips for hiring a contractor**

- Ask for and check company references. Also, call the [Iowa] Better Business Bureau at 800-222-1600 or 515-243-8137 to check if a company has a satisfactory record. Contact the Iowa Attorney General's Office at 888-777-4590 or 515-281-5926 to see if it has any complaints about a company.
- Beware of price gouging.
- Make any temporary repairs then take the time to hire ethical business contractors.
- Check with your insurance company.
- Compare bids but determine which company will provide the best quality and not just the lowest price.
- Reputable companies don't ask for the entire fee up-front.

Sources: U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission; National Institute of Inspection, Cleaning and Restoration.